

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-12 and 15-28 are pending in this application. Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 3, 4, 8-10 and 20-28 are allowed, and claims 2, 6, 7, 11 and 13 contain allowable subject matter.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 12, 18 and 19 are amended to obviate informalities, as the Examiner requested. Allowable claims 6 and 11 are rewritten in independent form. Furthermore, claims 1 and 19 are amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 2. Claim 2 is canceled. Claim 12 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter recited in claim 13, and claim 13 is canceled. Thus, claims 1, 3-12 and 15-28 are placed in condition for allowance.

The Office Action indicates that a certified copy of the Japanese Priority Document has not been submitted to the Patent Office. Applicants respectfully submit that the certified copy of the priority document was submitted August 2, 2006, after the July 27, 2006 mailing date of the Office Action. Thus, the Examiner will have received the certified copy of the Priority Document by the time this Amendment is filed. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the Priority Document in the next Office Action.

The Office Action objects to the Drawings, asserting that the term "horizontal direction" and the term "vertical direction" are each singular but each indicates two directions opposite to each other. This objection is respectfully traversed.

The term "horizontal direction" used in the specification and shown in the figures represents any direction in the horizontal plane. Thus, in the figures, "horizontal direction" represents both "front-to-rear direction" and "rear-to-front direction." Applicants respectfully submit that the term "horizontal direction," even if used in the singular form, may represent multiple directions, as long as the multiple directions are in the horizontal plane. Similarly, "vertical direction" represents multiple directions, such as "top-to-bottom direction" and

"bottom-to-top" direction as long as these directions are in a vertical plane. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the Drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to the claims. Claims 1, 3, 12, 18 and 19 are amended as the Examiner requested. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the claims is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 5 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,612,763 to Yoshihara; and rejects claims 12 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,844,687 to Nagane. These rejections are moot in view of the incorporation of allowable subject matter into each of independent claims 1, 12 and 19, as outlined above.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-12 and 15-28 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:GXL/jth

Attachment:

Amendment Transmittal

Date: October 20, 2006

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